First Congregational
United Church of Christ

111 S. Wallace Blvd. Ypsilanti, MI 48197
(Mailing Address: P.O. Box 980413 Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
www.ypsiucc.org

An open and affirming community committed to peace and justice

January 1, 2023
10:00 am

“The Gospel According to Sheep”

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, You are welcome here!

WORSHIP ON ZOOM -- Zoom opens at 9:30 am Sunday morning.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7643282234

Meeting ID: 764 328 2234
Passcode: Ypsi1882
To join by phone, dial the number, 1-312-626-6799

- Welcome to Ypsilanti First Congregational UCC's Zoom Worship Service
- Hymns are included in the worship bulletin. A separate hymnal is not needed.
- If you are joining worship for the first-time on Zoom, please add your name and email to the chat so the Zoomie Greeter can introduce you.
- Thank you for choosing to worship with us today!

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT OF
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ypsilanti

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ypsilanti celebrates everyone, including people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identifies and expressions, family configurations, economic circumstances, physical, cognitive, or emotional abilities, education or spiritual or religious traditions. All are welcome to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry, and missions of this church as we seek to grow together in a safe, nurturing community of faith. We strive to demonstrate in all ways that "NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!"

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE *Start Zoom Recording to Cloud **JOSHUA CATANIA**

"The Little Drummer Boy"

RINGING THE BELL **MARTY KLEINO**

WELCOME **PASTOR LIZ**

- A warm welcome to all, including first-time visitors.
- As stated in our Open and Affirming Covenant (previous page), all persons are welcome in this community of faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS **DONNA EYSTER**

- **COMMUNITY SHARING OF OTHER ANNOUNCMENTS:**
  - The Zoom Host, Worship Leader and Greeter is Donna Eyster.
  - The Donna will introduce folks participating in worship.
  - Please share your announcements so everyone can learn what is happening in our beloved ministry community.
  - Please submit written announcements to Margaret Harner, Worship Coordinator, margaretsharner@gmail.com, by midnight on Tuesday.

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

GATHERING HYMN *Microphone muted **TIFFANIE WALDRON**

"Angels, from the Realms of Glory"
126 NCH

CALL TO WORSHIP **DONNA EYSTER**

We are gathered this first day of the New Year to hear the story of the birth of Jesus through the experience of sheep. The story will be told by a Professor with the help of some sheep and the help of God.

CAST

The Professor	**Tad Wysor**
Sheep	**Kiki Fugate**
God	**Jeanette Sherrill**

THE PROFESSOR

When God first got the idea of sheep, it was just one small idea in a much bigger idea called *The Universe*. Indeed, this Big Idea was so big it has taken billions of human lifetimes to get as far as we have today in understanding it – and we're still quite a long way from really getting God's Big Idea.

Along the way, some human beings remembered stories of God's ideas and wrote them down in what is now the Bible. This is not all the good ideas God ever had, just some of the ones that have been remembered and written down. But amongst those ideas are things about sheep. Sheep may not seem that great to some of you, but the fact is, God thinks pretty highly of sheep and included them in the Big Idea. Human beings, and sheep too, have remembered that. In the Bible there are lots of stories about sheep. And we're going to tell you some today.

CAROL *Microphone muted **TIFFANIE WALDRON**

“ Sheep Fast Asleep”
137 NCH

THE PROFESSOR

The big idea didn’t begin with sheep. It began with space and time, and light and dark, and a thing called the firmament.

SHEEP

Seems I remember something about that. What is it?

THE PROFESSOR

The firmament is the sky above us and the earth beneath us—together they make up the firmament. Without the firmament there would be no place for sheep and humans to live.

BIBLE READING **Genesis 1:1-5** **DONNA EYSTER**

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2 But the earth became chaos and emptiness, and darkness came over the face of
the Deep – yet the Spirit of God was brooding over the surface of the waters.
3 Then God said, *Light: Be!* And light was.
4 God saw that light was good, and God separated light from darkness.
5 God called the light *Day* and the darkness *Night.* Evening came, and morning followed-
the first day.

SHEEP

What about the sheep?

THE PROFESSOR

Well, sheep didn’t appear right away. It took God a couple of days to get round to them, and all the other animals, including people.

God

Now, let me see. Let the water be filled with many kinds of living creatures, and the air be filled with birds. Let the earth produce all kinds of animals, tame and wild, large and small.

THE PROFESSOR

And God saw all that and was very pleased. Time went by. Sheep and people lived side by side. But people were not as reliable as God would have liked them to be. People kept misbehaving, doing bad things to each other and spoiling the world. Eventually, God had had enough of this.

SHEEP

What about us sheep? What were we doing all this time?

THE PROFESSOR

That's a good question. The Bible doesn't mention this, but I think the sheep were just getting on with being sheep, living in flocks, eating and growing, having lambs and so on.

SHEEP

Sounds good.

THE PROFESSOR

So, as I was saying, God had enough of people's bad behavior and so reluctantly God decided to destroy the earth with a flood. But before that happened, God noticed Noah.

GOD

Noah, I want you to build an ark. It needs to be big and strong. I am going to send a flood to destroy the world and I want you and your family to take enough animals into the ark so that after the flood the world can begin again.

THE PROFESSOR

So, Noah started building the ark. He got quite a lot of teasing and comment from his neighbors. But he just got on with the job God had given him to do. Eventually, the ark was finished, and Noah and his family started to put the animals inside. The animals went in two by two.

SHEEP

What about us?

THE PROFESSOR

Don't worry, two sheep went into the ark with all the other animals. The rain came and the earth was flooded, and for 40 days and nights the ark floated on the floodwater before coming to rest on a mountain. After that, all the animals came out (probably more than went in). Then God sent a sign to Noah and his family that this would never happen again.

BIBLE READING **Genesis 9:8–14,17** **IVAN HARNER**

8 God then said to Noah and his family,
9 *I hereby establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you,*
10 *and with every living creature that is with you—birds, cattle, and the earth's wildlife—everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth.*
11 *I hereby establish my covenant with you: All flesh will never again be swept away by the waters of the flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth.*
12 God said, *Here is the sign of the covenant between me and you and every living creature for ageless generations:*
13 *I set my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.*
14 *When I bring clouds over the earth; my bow will appear in the clouds.*
17 God said to Noah, *This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all living things on earth.*

SHEEP

What happened next? Are there more stories about sheep?

THE PROFESSOR

Yes, there are lots, but we haven't got time for them all. Perhaps we could just have the most important one

SHEEP

I'm getting tired now. I need to go to sleep. Have you got a nice story to send us to sleep please?

THE PROFESSOR

I'll do my best. How about the best story of all?

SHEEP

Yes, the best story of all!

THE PROFESSOR

Settle down then, and listen carefully…
Two thousand years ago some sheep were witnesses to a very special event.
It was the night that God's heir, Jesus, was born, and this is what happened.

SCRIPTURE READING **Luke 2:1-7** **DONNA EYSTER**

1 In those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole
Roman world.
2 The first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.
3 All the people were instructed to go back to the towns of their birth to register.
4 And so Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to "the city of David"—
Bethlehem, in Judea, because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David;
5 He went to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was pregnant.
6 While they were there, the time came for her delivery.
7 She gave birth to her firstborn; she put her baby in a simple cloth wrapped like a
receiving blanket, and laid him in a feeding trough for cattle, because there was no
room for them at the inn.

CAROL **Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good**
138 NCH v. 1-4

SCRIPTURE READING **Luke 2:8-14** **IVAN HARNER**

8 There were shepherds in the area living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns
over their flock.
9 The angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them;
they were very much afraid.
10 The angel said to them, *You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to
you—news of great joy to be shared by the whole people.*
11 *Today in David's city, a savior—the Messiah—has been born to you.*
12 *Let this be a sign to you: you'll find an infant wrapped in simple cloth, lying in a manger*
13 Suddenly, there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and
saying,
14 *Glory to God in high heaven! And on earth, peace to those on whom God's favor rests.*

CAROL **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**
131 NCH v. 1, 2, 4

SCRIPTURE READING **Luke 2:15-20** **DONNA EYSTER**

15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, *Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see this event that God has made known to us.*
16 They hurried and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger;
17 Once they saw this, they reported what they had been told concerning the child.
18 All who heard about it were astonished at the report given by the shepherds.
19 Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart.
20 The shepherds went away glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told.

THE PROFESSOR

As I expect you know, God's Big Idea never ends because we keep telling the story to each other, and so the story goes on and on.

We know that sheep are important to God. And if sheep are important to God, so are all parts of God's creation, including human beings! So important in fact that God sent Jesus to be born and live alongside us and be with us forever. This is what we celebrate at Christmas. It's the gospel, the good news about Jesus, God's own heir.

SHEEP

And I'm glad some of you humans remember that we sheep are a big part of it all!

CAROL **Hark! the Herald Angels Sing**
144 NCH

CONVERSING WITH THE HOLY ONE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Pause Zoom recording
*Zoomies: Please turn on your microphone

You are invited to share your joys and petitions for prayer.
Please unmute your microphone to share a joy or make a prayer of petition.
At the end of each joy or petition, please say **"God in your mercy"**
We will respond (with microphones muted) **"Hear our prayers"**

PASTORAL PRAYER *Restart Zoom recording **PASTOR LIZ**

DISCIPLES' PRAYER *Unison with Microphone muted **PASTOR LIZ**

God of Creation and Wonder, you formed us in your image.
You gave us your Son who taught us how to live out your teachings.
Give us the strength and wisdom to make this world your world.
Open our hearts to the possibilities of the new year.
Remove any cynicism or mistrust we may be clinging to
and fill us with the hope of a new beginning.
Amen.

OFFERING

INVITATION TO OFFERING **PASTOR LIZ**

Our electronic giving platform is Tithe.ly: Link to Tithe.ly

Checks can be mailed to:
First Congregational United Church of Christ
PO Box 980413, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Thank you for your generosity!

OFFERTORY **"Away in the Manger"** **JOSHUA CATANIA**

DOXOLOGY *Microphone muted **TIFFANIE WALDRON**

"Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child` ``
NCH 136

PRAYER OF DEDICATION *Unison with Microphone muted **DONNA EYSTER**

With these gifts, loving God, accept the praise and thanksgiving of our hearts, which rejoice in your goodness and love.
Let our gifts point to your presence in the world, and further your dream for the world through Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us.
Amen.

DEPARTING WITH PRAISE

CLOSING HYMN *Microphone muted **TIFFANIE WALDRON**

"In the Bleak Midwinter"
128 NCH

BENEDICTION *Unison with microphones muted **PASTOR LIZ**

Send us into the world refreshed in hope,
Awake, alert, attuned to your presence and
ready to join your work of blessing for all.
Amen.

POSTLUDE Please remain seated **JOSHUA CATANIA**

"Improvisation on Christmas Hymns"
Joshua Catania

PASSING THE PEACE **FRIENDS GATHERED**

*Save Zoom Recording to Cloud (click "yes")

- Share a greeting with others as we transition to our casual **Friendship Time.**

Zoom Only Sunday Worship 10:00 am

Rev. Liz Larrivee, Pastor & Spiritual Director
Tiffanie Waldron, Music Director
Joshua Catania, Guest Accompanist

Jenn Zibbell, MID Ministry Intern
Donna Eyster, Worship Leader
Marty Kleino, Usher & Bell Ringer

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ATTRIBUTIONS FOR TODAY'S BULLETIN

- **Cover Art:** Quang Nguyen Vinh
- **Call to Worship:** *The Gospel According to Sheep* by Janet Lees. Adapted
- **Disciples Prayer, Prayer of Dedication & Benediction:** UCC, Worship Ways.
- **Hymn Profiles:** *New Century Hymnal Companion,* Pilgrim Press (1999)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For pastoral care needs and/or emergencies, please call or text Pastor Liz, 734-358-6108

Worship Next Week: Worship Leader is Rev Dan Kidder-McQuown, Greeters

WeROC January Meeting of the Whole: In-Person Jan 5, 5:00 PM at Ypsi UCC
This will be WeROC's first in-person monthly Meeting of the Whole since Covid. It will be held at Ypsi UCC. Tad, Melanie, and Pastor Liz will be experimenting with our hybrid worship technology to support WeROC in its ability to offer a hybrid MOTW meeting option. All are invited to attend and demonstrate Ypsi UCC extravagant hospitality to our WeROC partners in our newly solidified organizational partnership. We are delighted to be exploring new ways for Ypsi UCC and WeROC to strengthen our partnership in 2023

2022 Vitality Grant Award, Ypsi UCC Community Discernment Gatherings, and "Engaging Christian Contemplative Practices"

Some very exciting news: **Ypsi UCC has been awarded a $3,000 Vitality Grant from the UCC Michigan Conference to support our Community Discernment work based on Susan Beaumont's book.** We are one of only three churches in Michigan to receive this very competitive grant this year.

To provide additional support for our ongoing Community Discernment Gathering work, Church Council is offering Pastor Liz and all interested Ypsi UCC participants $150 scholarships to cover the cost of attending a 6-session evening Zoom seminar beginning titled "Engaging

Christian Contemplative Practices" offered by the UCC Southern New England Center for Leadership Development. Read the detailed information included below or click on this link to learn more:

https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/16606401?month=1&year=2023&day=1&display=

Please let Donna Eyster, Moderator, (deyster63@gmail.com) know as soon as possible if you would like to attend. Donna will complete the seminar registration and payment for you. There are a limited number of spots, so register right away.

Our on-going Community Discernment Gatherings will continue via Zoom on Monday nights at 7:00 pm after our current Advent/Christmas/Epiphany "pause" beginning on January 23, 2023. If you have questions after reviewing the additional information attached below, please contact Pastor Liz (lizlarrivee@gmail.com).

THE CENTER FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
IS PLEASED TO OFFER
ENGAGING CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES
A 6-PART ZOOM SERIES FACILITATED BY REV. MATT CARRIKER
What does "contemplation" mean? When we "contemplate" an idea, contemplation implies something deeper than thinking only. In contemplation, we start from a place of mystery and an acceptance of not knowing.
As we release fear's grip and open our minds and hearts, new revelations are revealed to us. We shall talk more about these foundations over the course of our "Introduction to Christian Contemplative Practices" gatherings.
SESSION DATES (2023):
JANUARY 18; FEBRUARY 1; FEBRUARY 15;
MARCH 1; MARCH 15; AND MARCH 29
FROM 7:00-8:30 PM
Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus
The Center for Transformational Leadership
Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ

OUR MINISTRIES

HOLY GROUNDS

During the Omicron (COVID) surge members of Ypsi UCC provided local coffee, tea, coffee cups, and single packaged snacks for the night shift at Trinity Health St. Joe Mercy Hospital where Rev. Dan Kidder-McQuown is the night chaplain. While the COVID crisis has partially resolved, the stress level of the night staff has not. Contributing factors include the long-term emerging effects of COVID, a lack of staff, a nation-wide nurse shortage, and staff burnout. The night shift greatly appreciates this ministry of hospitality and caring.

Please consider donating coffee that is roasted by local Michigan companies. Tea and single packaged candy or snacks are also welcome. Please contact Marty Kleino at Mgkleino@gmail.com or 734-262-1419 to have your donation delivered to St. Joes. If you would like more information about this ministry, please contact Dan Kidder-McQuown at mcq188@gmail.com or 517-240-8413.

THE BEACON CENTER

The **Beacon Center** is the newest community social justice of the Ypsilanti First Congregational UCC. As a light to all persons, the Beacon Center's ministry will support the spiritual formation, creative expression, overall thriving and advocacy of at-risk students of all ages, including those affiliated with three primary local institutions of higher learning: Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College and University of Michigan. In the Spirit of the UCC moto, "That They All Shall Be One", Beacon Center serves as a uniting and unifying umbrella across our congregation serving persons sources through our three other community social justice ministry networks. Those ministries (each detailed below) include WICIR (Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights) serving the immigrant communities, MI-ONA (Michigan Open and Affirming Coalition) serving LGTBQ+ persons, and WeROC (Washtenaw Regional Organizing Coalition) which brings together faith, labor and community organizations to address local issues.

The Beacon Center is committed to advocate for self-determination and education for all people, especially students living in poverty, persons of color experiencing racism, and other de-humanizing circumstances and conditions. Beacon Center's student demographics include persons of color, immigrants, minorities, LGTBQ+ folk, women, those with special needs, the economically disadvantaged, those facing housing insecurity, the financially challenged, and the working poor. For additional information on the Beacon Center, please contact Rev. Liz Larrivee at lizlarrivee@gmail.com

IMMIGRATION MINISTRY – WASHTENAW INTERFAITH COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS (WICIR)

Since 2008, **WICIR** has been working with, and in support of, immigrants in Washtenaw County facing challenges of many kinds. At our inception the primary need that brought us together was to support people facing enforcement action by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement); most often detention, deportation, and removal. To date, WICIR has responded to 650 calls. Always in partnership with folks most affected, many actions and services have evolved as identified by our immigrant siblings, while always keeping focused on our original mission:

To provide culturally sensitive and supportive urgent response to those in Washtenaw County in immigration-related crises; impact local governmental policies to empower and protect immigrant community members; and work toward humane national immigration reform.

Our outreach has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many in immigrant communities have experienced significant challenges as they struggle to pay rent, provide food for their families and other basic survival needs. To respond, WICIR, in partnership with Mexiquenses in Michigan (from St. Francis of Assisi Parish), has raised and distributed $200,000 relief funds to immigrants and their families. We have a waiting list of those still in need and will continue this effort as funds are available.

For information about what's happening with immigrant rights and **Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights**, or if you are interested in learning ways to help, please contact Melanie Harner at melharner@gmail.com or through the WICIR website: https://wicir.org/. You can also find a link on the church website.

WASHTENAW REGIONAL ORGANIZING COALITION

First Congregational is a founding institution of the local "organization of organizations" **WeROC (Washtenaw Regional Organizing Coalition)**. In many ways, WeROC is a larger illustration of the values and mission we try to live out at First Congregational. WeROC members are, at our core, focused on intentionally re-weaving the frayed fabric of community at a time when forces are at work every day to keep us fragmented, suspicious of each other, feeling isolated. Especially in this time when so many are being hit by the health and economic crises, WeROC's focus on raising voices of those most affected is more important than ever (See COVID-19 Resources at www.werocmi.org) WeROC's Mission Statement is:

WeROC brings together faith, labor, community organizations, and individuals to build the healthy collective power needed to break down the systems that sustain injustice, racism, and economic inequality.

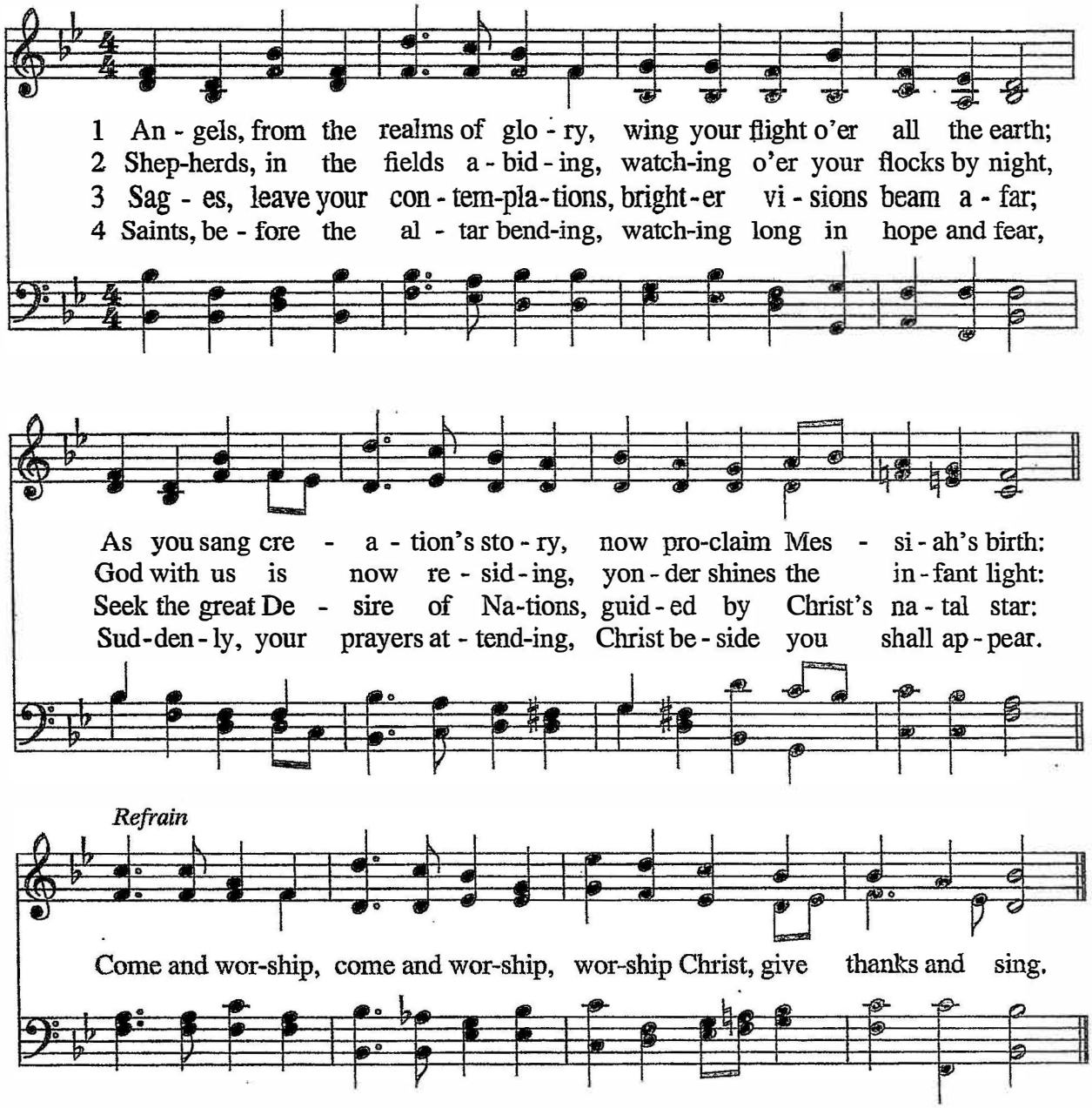
WeROC is affiliated with the Detroit Metro organization MOSES and the Gamliel National Network. Contact Tad Wysor at tadwysor@gmail.com or 734-883-3225.

This past election year showed us good things can happen when we're working together in the same direction. WeROC is moving rapidly **forward** to keep momentum going and find ways to continue to be more effective together in making our communities healthier and more vibrant places; improving the lives of *everyone* in big ways-- especially those who are most vulnerable and whose voice have seldom been heard.

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

126

James Montgomery, 1816; alt.

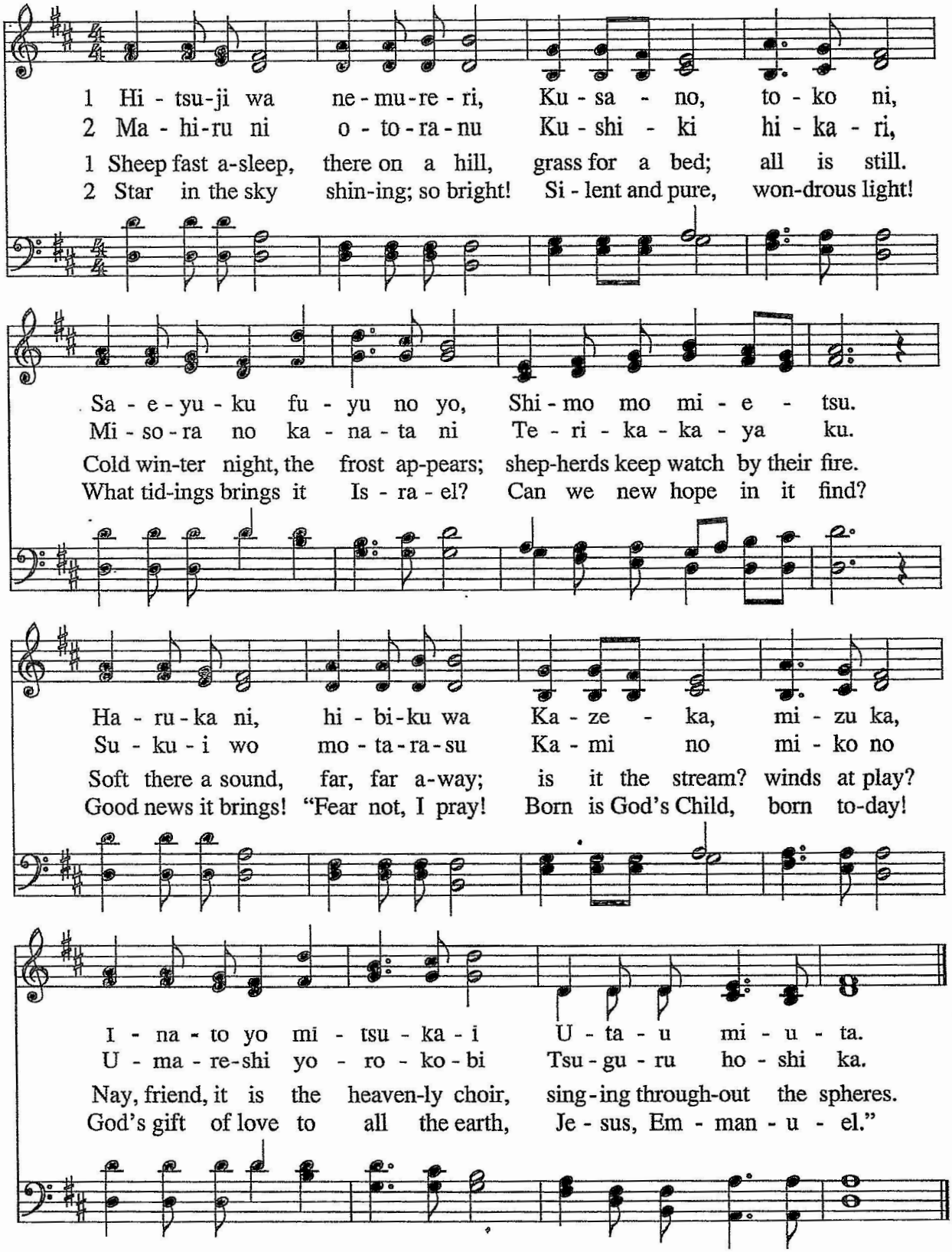
Luke 2:8–20; Matt. 2:1–2, 9–11

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem-pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend-ing, watch-ing long in hope and fear,
As you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro-claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light:
Seek the great De - sire of Na-tions, guid - ed by Christ's na - tal star:
Sud - den - ly, your prayers at - tend-ing, Christ be - side you shall ap - pear.
Refrain
Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, give thanks and sing.

James Montgomery, English journalist, raised a strong voice against injustice in his newspaper Sheffield Iris, *in which this hymn was first printed on December 24, 1816. The tune is named for Regent Square Church in London, today a congregation of the United Reformed Church in England and Wales.*

Tune: REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7.
Henry T. Smart, 1867

137 Hitsuji wa nemureri
(Sheep Fast Asleep)

Luke 2:8–14; Matt. 1:23; 2:1–2, 9–11

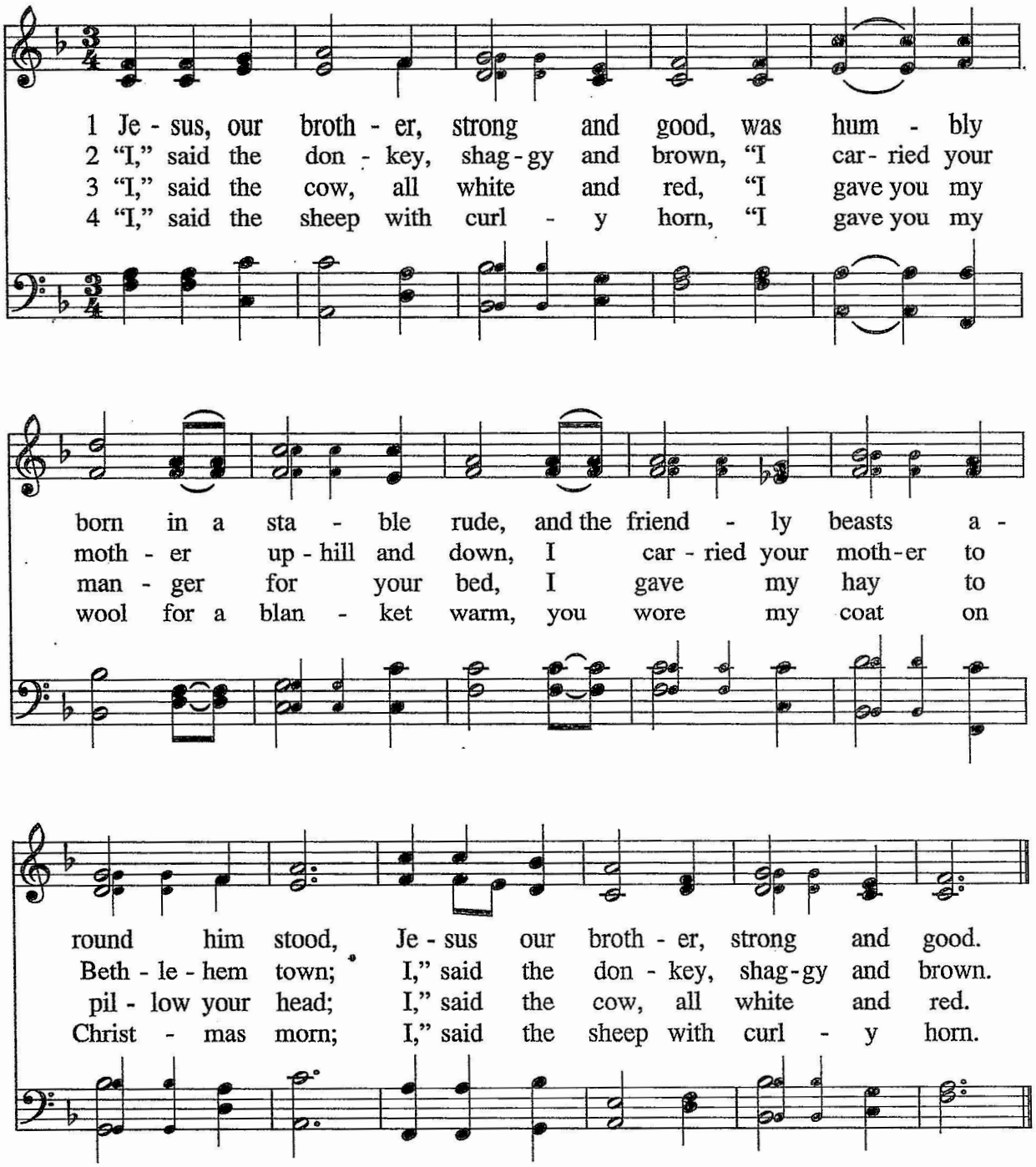
Genzō Miwa, 1907
Transl. John Moss, 1957; alt.

1 Hi - tsu-ji wa ne - mu-re - ri, Ku - sa - no, to - ko ni,
2 Ma - hi-ru ni o - to-ra-nu Ku - shi - ki hi - ka - ri,
1 Sheep fast a-sleep, there on a hill, grass for a bed; all is still.
2 Star in the sky shin-ing; so bright! Si - lent and pure, won-drous light!
Sa - e - yu - ku fu - yu no yo, Shi - mo mo mi - e - tsu.
Mi - so - ra no ka - na - ta ni Te - ri - ka - ka - ya ku.
Cold win-ter night, the frost ap-pears; shep-herds keep watch by their fire.
What tid-ings brings it Is - ra - el? Can we new hope in it find?
Ha - ru - ka ni, hi - bi - ku wa Ka - ze - ka, mi - zu ka,
Su - ku - i wo mo - ta - ra - su Ka - mi no mi - ko no
Soft there a sound, far, far a-way; is it the stream? winds at play?
Good news it brings! "Fear not, I pray! Born is God's Child, born to-day!
I - na - to yo mi - tsu - ka - i U - ta - u mi - u - ta.
U - ma - re-shi yo - ro - ko - bi Tsu - gu - ru ho - shi ka.
Nay, friend, it is the heaven-ly choir, sing-ing through-out the spheres.
God's gift of love to all the earth, Je - sus, Em - man - u - el."

Written by Genzō Miwa in 1907, the text of this popular Japanese Christmas hymn was later revised and published in Kyodan Sambika *(1954) with the current tune. Translator John Moss has served as a United Church of Christ missionary in Niigata, Japan.*

Tune: KŌRIN 8.7.8.7.8.7.8.6.
Chūgorō Torii, 1941

Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good 138

French carol, 12th century
Transl. anon.

Luke 2:1–7; Matt. 1:23

1 Je - sus, our broth - er, strong and good, was hum - bly
born in a sta - ble rude, and the friend - ly beasts a -
round him stood, Je - sus our broth - er, strong and good.
2 "I," said the don - key, shag - gy and brown, "I car - ried your
moth - er up - hill and down, I car - ried your moth - er to
Beth - le - hem town; I," said the don - key, shag - gy and brown.
3 "I," said the cow, all white and red, "I gave you my
man - ger for your bed, I gave my hay to
pil - low your head; I," said the cow, all white and red.
4 "I," said the sheep with curl - y horn, "I gave you my
wool for a blan - ket warm, you wore my coat on
Christ - mas morn; I," said the sheep with curl - y horn.

5 "I," said the dove, from the raf-ters high,
"I cooed you to sleep that you should not cry,
we cooed you to sleep, my love and I;
I," said the dove, from the raf-ters high.

6 Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
in the sta-ble dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Em-man-u-el,
the gifts they gave Em-man-u-el.

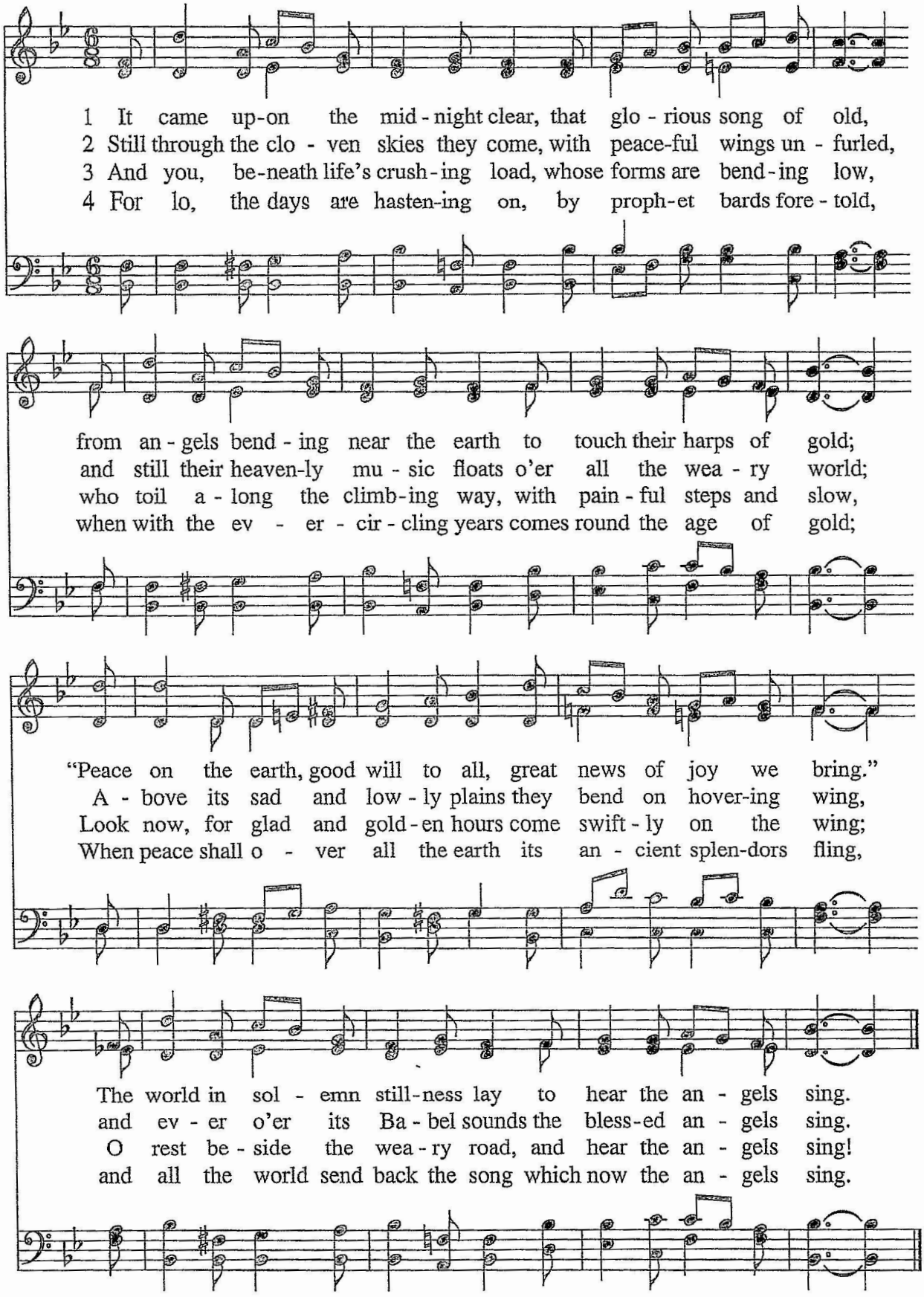
Little is known of either the origins of this French text or its translation. The melody comes from a medieval French cathedral festival recognizing the role of the donkey in the flight into Egypt.

Tune: ORIENTIS PARTIBUS 7.7.7.7.
French melody, early 13th century
Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Harmonization Copyright ©, Oxford University Press. From *The English Hymnal 1906.*

131 It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Luke 2:8–14 *Edmund H. Sears, 1849; alt.*

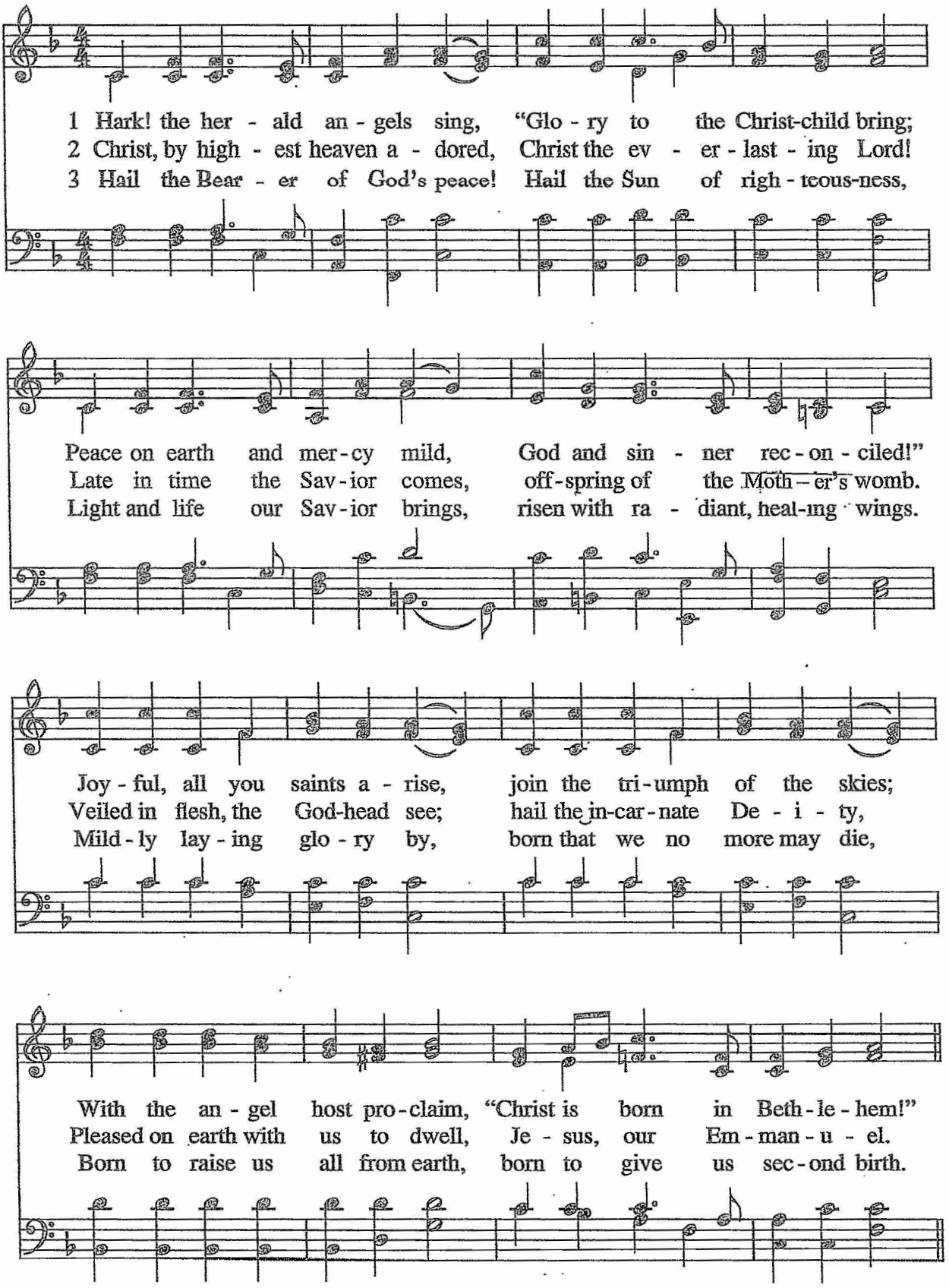

1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,
from an-gels bend-ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
2 Still through the clo-ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un-furled,
and still their heaven-ly mu-sic floats o'er all the wea-ry world;
3 And you, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
who toil a-long the climb-ing way, with pain-ful steps and slow,
4 For lo, the days are hasten-ing on, by proph-et bards fore-told,
when with the ev-er-cir-cling years comes round the age of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring."
A-bove its sad and low-ly plains they bend on hover-ing wing,
Look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift-ly on the wing;
When peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,
The world in sol-emn still-ness lay to hear the an-gels sing.
and ev-er o'er its Ba-bel sounds the bless-ed an-gels sing.
O rest be-side the wea-ry road, and hear the an-gels sing!
and all the world send back the song which now the an-gels sing.

Edmund Sears, a Unitarian minister who served a number of congregations in the Boston area, wrote this Christmas hymn emphasizing the social implications of the Gospel for his congregation at Wayland, Massachusetts.

Tune: CAROL C.M.D.
Richard S. Willis, 1850

144 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

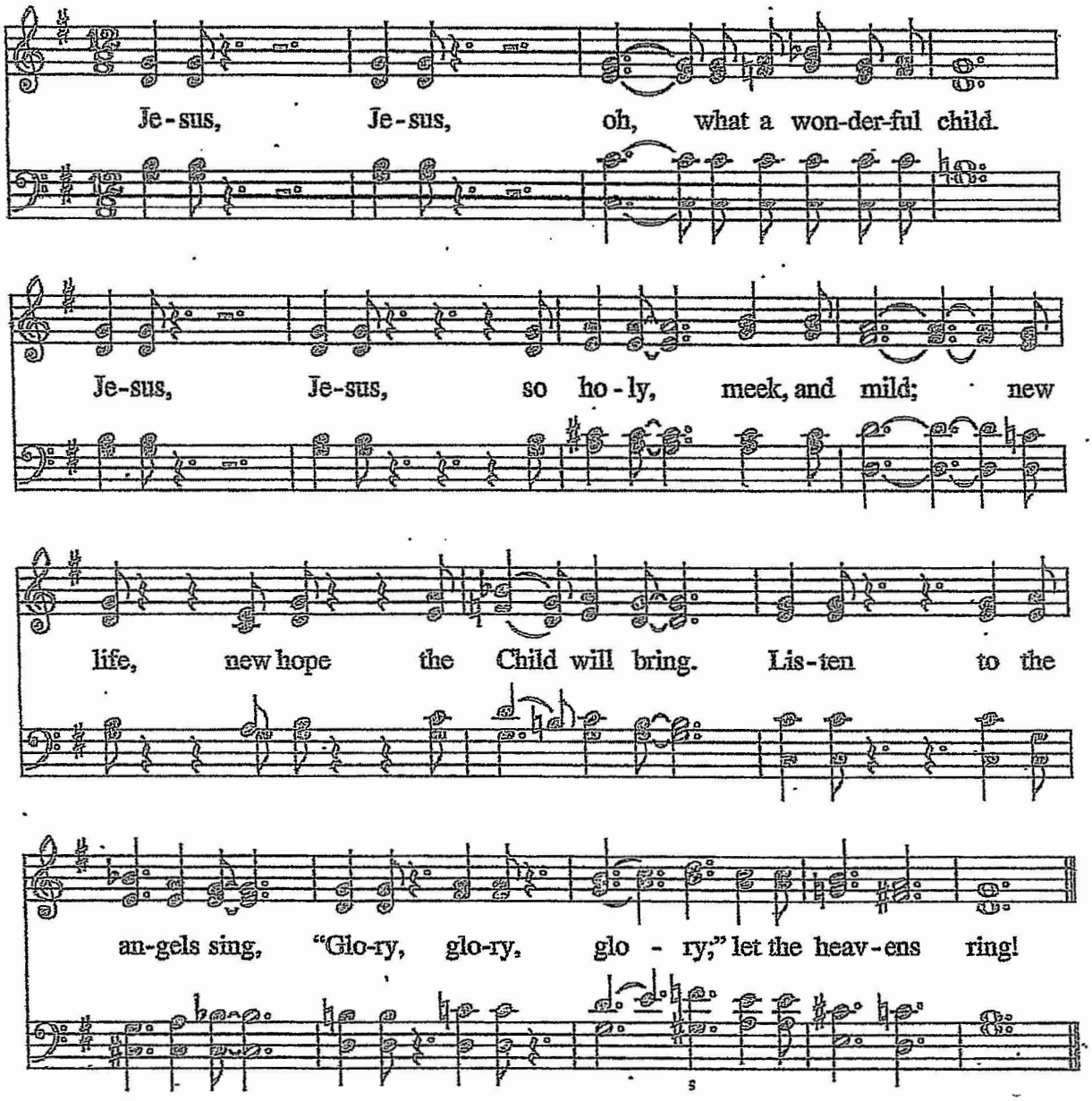
Luke 2:10–11, 25–32; 24:46–51;
1 Thess. 4:13–18; Isa. 60:19–20

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the Christ-child bring;
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
3 Hail the Bear - er of God's peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous-ness,
Peace on earth and mer-cy mild, God and sin - ner rec - on - ciled!"
Late in time the Sav-ior comes, off-spring of the Moth – er's womb.
Light and life our Sav-ior brings, risen with ra - diant, heal-ing wings.
Joy - ful, all you saints a - rise, join the tri-umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh, the God-head see; hail the in-car-nate De - i - ty,
Mild - ly lay - ing glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,
With the an - gel host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased on earth with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

This hymn by Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, is firmly wedded to Felix Mendelssohn's music. Composed for the four hundredth anniversary of the invention of printing, the music was adapted to this hymn fifteen years later.

Tune: MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.7.D. with refrain
From Felix Mendelssohn's "Festgesang," 1840
Arr. William H. Cummings, 1855

Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child 136

African-American traditional; alt. *Luke 1:30–35; 2:8–14*

Je-sus, Je-sus, oh, what a won-der-ful child.
Je-sus, Je-sus, so ho-ly, meek, and mild; new
life, new hope the Child will bring. Lis-ten to the
an-gels sing, "Glo-ry, glo-ry, glo - ry;" let the heav-ens ring!

This gospel song praising the newborn Child might be effectively used by repeating it several times. It could be sung softly as a background for dance, story, or drama. Finger-snaps on the off-beats might be used to fill the rests.

Tune: WONDERFUL CHILD 11.10.8.7.11.
African-American traditional
Arr. Jeffrey Radford, 1992

Jeffrey Paul Radford, was music director for 36 years at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. Under his direction, the Trinity choirs sang throughout Chicago, in a dozen U.S. cities and performed in Switzerland, Germany, Puerto Rico and Cuba. In 1995 he was part of the team that created the UCC New Century Hymnal, with inclusive language and widened the inclusion of new hymns and hymns from around the world. He was instrumental in creating the UCC African American Hymnal.

Mr. Radford's father, a jazz musician, encouraged his son's musical interest. By age 10, Mr. Radford was studying piano. He was an adjunct faculty member at Chicago Theological Seminary and, after his death in 2002, he received a posthumous doctor of divinity degree from CTS for his contributions to musical ministry.

In the Bleak Midwinter

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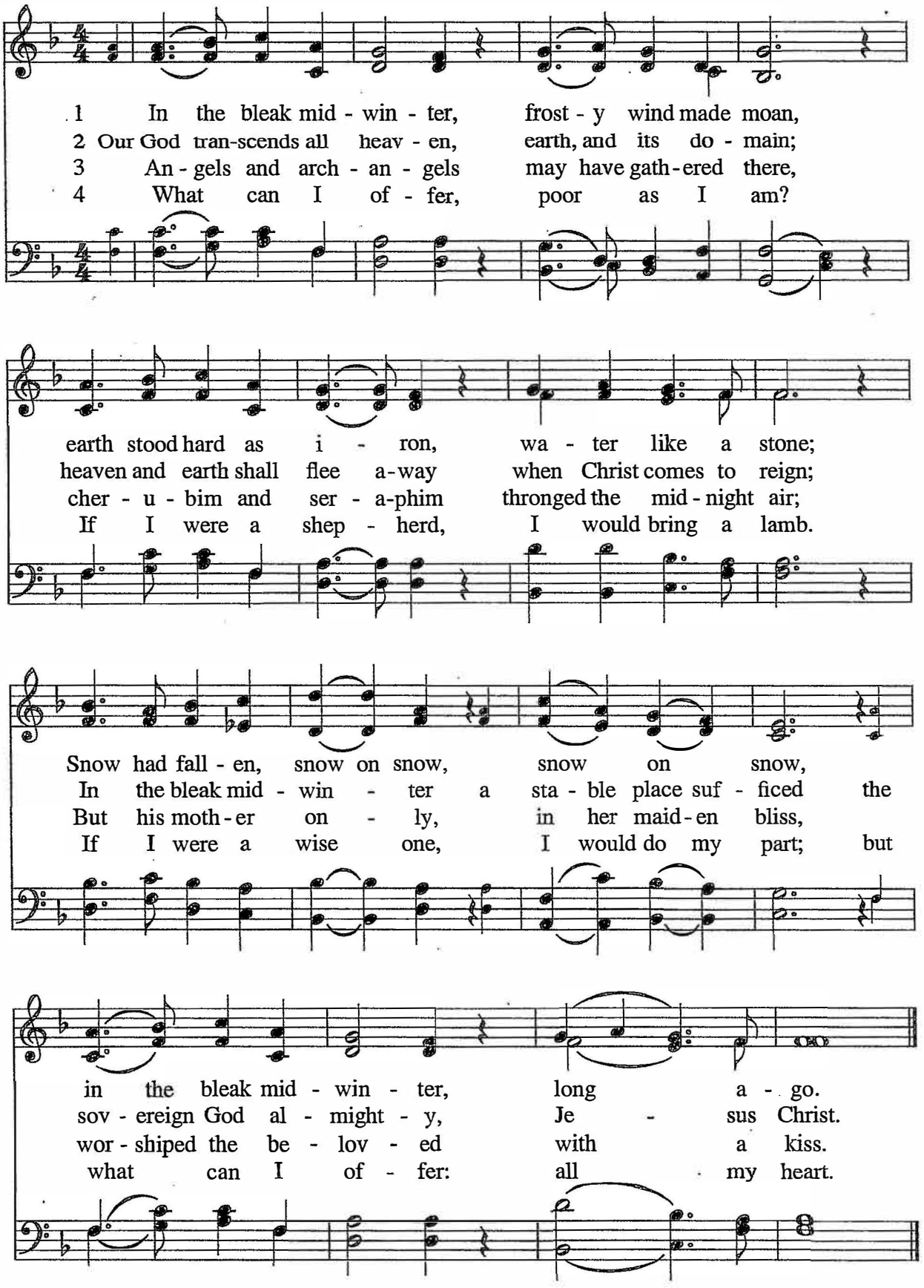
Christina G. Rossetti, 1872; alt.

1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
2 Our God tran-scends all heav - en, earth, and its do - main;
3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there,
4 What can I of - fer, poor as I am?
earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heaven and earth shall flee a-way when Christ comes to reign;
cher - u - bim and ser - a-phim thronged the mid - night air;
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb.
Snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed the
But his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
If I were a wise one, I would do my part; but
in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
sov - ereign God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
wor - shiped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
what can I of - fer: all my heart.

Christina Rossetti has portrayed the Christmas story, not in warm Bethlehem, but in the winter of her native England. Rossetti was an accomplished writer of poetry and prose,

Tune: CRANHAM Irr.
Gustav Holst, 1906